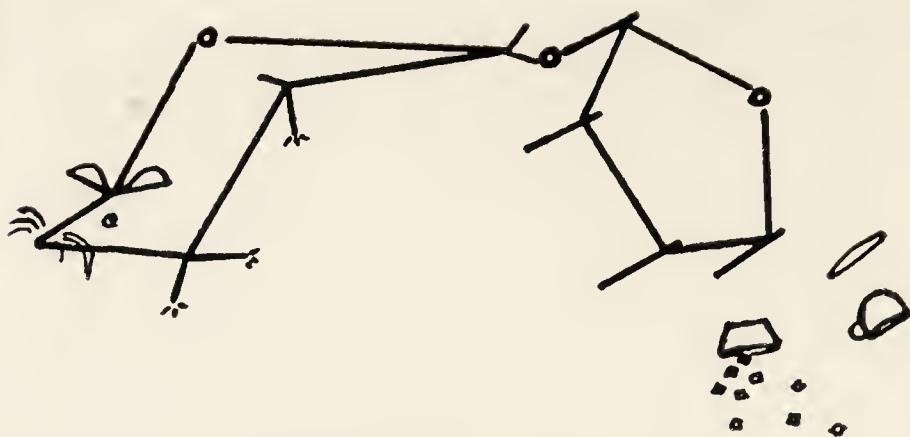


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John Yudkin



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A

PRACTICABLE PLAN

FOR

MANNING THE ROYAL NAVY,

AND

PRESERVING OUR MARITIME ASCENDANCY,

WITHOUT

IMPRESSIONMENT:

ADDRESSED TO

ADMIRAL LORD VISCOUNT EXMOUTH, K. G. B.

BY THOMAS TROTTER, M. D.

LATE PHYSICIAN TO THE GRAND FLEET,

&c. &c. &c.

IF YOU WILL HAVE WAR, LET IT BE A NAVAL WAR. LET NOT A SHILLING
BE SENT TO THE ARMY, THAT CAN BE EXPENDED ON THE NAVY—NOR A
MAN SENT TO THE ARMY, THAT CAN BE EMPLOYED IN THE NAVY!

C. J. Fox.

Newcastle :

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1819.



Advertisement.

A work entitled “The Evils of Impressment,” has been lately published by Mr Urquhart, and attracted considerable attention. But Mr Urquhart has proposed no substitute, although he appears much displeased with all Naval arrangements. “Impressment” is rather to be considered the crime of the country and its legislators, than the vice of the Navy; for the Naval officer must obey his instructions. The plan which is offered in these pages for abolishing the practice, has already been tried on a small scale; and bears the authority of one of the greatest statesmen of the age. The Navy may thus be equipped with the same facility as the militia.

There can be but one wish in the nation on this subject; and every proposal ought to be fairly judged. I trust my Naval friends will perceive here, the same attachment to the service, which influenced all my former studies; and in such a cause they will not find me a cold advocate.

March 30, 1819.

TO
EDWARD,
LORD VISCOUNT EXMOUTH, K.G.B.

Admiral of the Blue, &c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

TIME and distance have so long divided me from Naval Service, that your Lordship may scarcely perceive the present enquiry to be a sequel to my former studies. Fastidious critics may also say, why resume a subject that comes so little within the province of the physician? A very plain reason can at once be given for this: no other person seems to have thought it worth attention, while it has engrossed much of my own meditation for

more than twenty years. Subjects of policy cannot be called foreign to medical investigation, if they involve health. When it became my task to impeach the wretched police of Plymouth Dock, in 1800, my representation was thought of so much importance to the safety of the public service, that it was transmitted by the Admiralty to the Lords of Council ; and after due deliberation, orders were issued to the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, to reduce the licensed gin shops from 300 to 100. Now my Lord, in this business, by abolishing these sources of intemperance, intoxication, and disorder, more benefit was done to the health of the fleet, than if I had sat down to compose prescriptions of medicine for an age to come. Should equal success follow the present investigation, a future war may be carried on, not only with less waste of human lives, but immense saving of public money. I should never have turned a thought to the subject, but from the most marked conviction that the Plan which I have proposed is fully equal to accomplish the Manning of

the Royal Navy without Impressment. My retired situation, and the little desire of obtruding myself on great men in office, have prevented me from making any communication to them on the nature of this undertaking. I think, however, the present period is a favourable opportunity, while ministers are winding up the affairs of the country after so long a war, to fix on a Plan of rendering our Naval force efficient in the event of future hostilities.

If the abolition of Impressment cannot be brought about, I shall still have some consolation in the purity of my motives; and of contributing some addition to the stock of facts, on a part of national police, that has been too long considered as incapable of melioration, and therefore neglected altogether.

Within the last 30 years, statesmen and legislators have been often warned to learn wisdom from the spirit of the times. This is a salutary lesson, and I would recommend some of my pages to their serious

perusal. This country was never placed in a more alarming crisis than in the turbulent condition of 1797 : let the causes which led to that eventful period be done away, and it can never be revived.

By the whole of the officers of his Majesty's Navy, the abolition of Impressment would be hailed as the happiest circumstance which could happen. Nothing can be more repugnant to the feelings of men of honour, than to see those seamen with whom they are to be associated in the service of their country, dragged like felons, and hunted like wild beasts, from the retreats where they may have taken shelter. How gratifying the thought, to a benevolent mind, that the means of putting an end to this reign of terror, are within our power, and can be accomplished with ease, and at a small expence.

Whatever improvements may have taken place in the Navy, and however great the encouragement given to the men, they must still fall short of what they ought to

be, while a system of coercion remains in the recruiting department. It is the nature of human society to be easily lulled into security, and to forget the evil day as soon as it is passed. Were this not the case, by what strange infatuation could the general mutiny of 1797 be so completely forgotten, as to have given birth to no measures that shall prevent the same danger from recurring. If I am correct in having detailed the rise and progress of this mutiny ; and that it was a business of seamen only, unconnected with any factious politics of those times, there must be strong reasons for adopting a mode of conciliation, and making them free agents in their contract of servitude with their country.

It will be no small satisfaction to myself, to find that your Lordship, and every Naval officer, shall bestow approbation on these my labours for the public good. What I have in view, is, to unite the seaman and his commander in bonds of indissoluble harmony to the cause o' the

country ; and to give to the equipment of future armaments, a rapidity and stability, that may render our Naval system perfect.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord, your Lordship's

Most obedient humble Servant,

T. TROTTER.

Newcastle upon Tyne,

March 1, 1819.

A

P L A N

FOR

MANNING THE ROYAL NAVY,

WITHOUT IMPRESSMENT.

It would appear superfluous in a discussion of this nature, to expatiate on the advantages which Great Britain derives from her Navy: her insular situation, her commercial interests, and her extended colonies, all conspire to enforce the policy of cultivating an invincible maritime system. Our greatest statesmen, politicians, and historians, all agree in this; and examples of its propriety have uniformly been recorded from the earliest stages of our existence as a nation. When the Romans first invaded Britain, trade, and the arts which flourish with it, were then unknown. Rome at this time had become a great naval power, and found it easy to collect a fleet, sufficient to

transport her legions for the subjugation of this island. Britain had not then a single ship to oppose the entrance of a hostile navy into her ports ; and as gun-powder was not then invented, the Roman vessels could chuse a secure anchorage without being assailed from the shore.

The introduction of Roman arts, manners, and laws, was a necessary consequence of this invasion, and began the civilization of Britain. When the Romans quitted the island in the fifth century, and the southern Britons were compelled to seek assistance from the Saxons, against the inroads of the Picts and Scots, they must have made some progress in ship-building and navigation, for they probably sailed to the mouth of the Elbe or Weser, in vessels of their own construction. And when the Danes came to invade Britain, some centuries afterwards, ship-building must have arrived at considerable improvement, for fleets were collected to oppose the Danes, and they were sometimes fought at sea. The harbours of the southern parts of the island, the Cinque Ports in particular, as being nearest to the continent, were no doubt the first places where ships were built, whether for the purposes of trade or war. The service of these ships was frequently called upon by government, and some privileges seem

to have been conferred upon them in return. As the spirit of civilization extended in the country, trade would also spread, and the inhabitants of every sea-port would naturally apply to ship-building and navigation, as means for obtaining the produce of other countries, and enriching themselves. But although the use of artillery was known in the fourteenth century, and the famous navigation act is said to have been first introduced about that time, yet it does not appear that there were any distinct ships employed, or purposely built for a Royal Navy. Trade and navigation made great progress in the reigns of Henry VII. and Henry VIII.; but even in the glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Royal Navy was extolled as great though consisting of only thirty-three ships.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada by an English Fleet, and its final destruction by the storms of heaven, "*afflavit et despiciabantur,*" no doubt much increased the national predilection for a naval force. The colonial system was now making advances, and continued to proceed, even in the reigns of the Stuarts. James II. was a naval officer, and the maritime code is said to have been much improved under his auspices. In the reigns of William and Mary, and Anne; that of George I. and George II,

the Naval power of Great Britain was increasing in glory: and in the reign of his present Majesty, it appears to have arrived at the summit of human greatness.

Now in all this brief sketch of our Naval History, from the Roman invasion to the present time, there is not an example given, of *manning* a British Fleet by constitutional measures. Ship-building has improved: Navigation has become more safe: Commerce and colonization have extended, and every art to compleat naval warfare has been brought to perfection: how comes it then, that Great Britain has neglected the last means which are required, to give permanence and security to the unrivalled superiority which she has attained?

The Legislature itself has never brought under its discussion a fixed plan for manning his Majesty's Ships on emergency. It has winked at the abuses of Impressing Seamen, as if it had found the means of doing it in any other form impracticable. The practice of Impressment no doubt first sprang from the arbitrary custom, in the early stages of our government, of demanding the service of all merchant vessels, for the purpose of war. But this practice being derived from the rude and barbarous periods of our history, cannot be appealed to

with any colour of justice. Slavery has long been abolished : the feudal system and villainage annihilated : sorcery and witchcraft have been forgotten : priestcraft no longer lords it over the consciences of men ; and laws have been enacted to secure person and property : but the poor seaman remains a public monument of the ingratitude of his country.

I may now be permitted to ask, by what acts or crimes, has the profession of seamanship thus forfeited the protection of the laws of the country ? Has the avaricious spirit of trade so hardened the human heart in Britain, that her seamen shall plead in vain for the privileges of national beneficence ? I am astonished at the apathy and indifference of statesmen to this business ; it may be styled, in the language of my own profession, the last stage of *insensibility* ; the very *apoplexy* of office. For while it has been the tenor of their councils to plunge the country into the horrors of war, they have forgotten one of the most essential portions of their own defence, namely, the special care that injustice and cruelty shall not be wantonly exercised on any department of the community by their measures.

I wish to remind men in power, of the unparalleled hardships to which seamen are exposed, from the nature of their employment. Toil

and danger are their constant attendants : they suffer privations to which all other men are strangers : famine, even to starvation, is often their lot : their food, the air which they breathe, and the changes of climate which they undergo, give a peculiar character to their diseases, which are of the most mortal kind. If any thing could be added to this detail of their sufferings, it is the unrepining fortitude, and matchless patience, with which they surmount the toils and perils incidental to their duty. Who, that has been their associate in service, but must have witnessed nameless trials of this unconquerable spirit ? And can no statesman or legislator be found, to bring the cause of so meritorious a class of human beings before the tribunal of their king, lords, and commons, in parliament assembled, that they may be rescued from the severity of their condition ?

My experience of the evils attending the Impress Service, has been acquired in my employment as surgeon of a receiving ship, during an active armament, and in my station at the head of the medical department of the Channel Fleet. The scenes of cruelty and affliction which have come under my review, have wrung my heart a thousand times. They are not fit to be related here, or indeed any where else ; for they exhibit all that is ferocious in the business of war, and disgusting or deformed in

the policy of a country that can permit the practice to be continued. I should indeed have been considered a cold-hearted Physician to have kept aloof from these narratives of individual distress: that physician must be deemed unworthy to approach the sick bed of a brave man, who feels no interest in his mental sufferings, while they print their distinguishing characteristic on his physical disorders.

We become at once more familiar with the evils and impolicy of impressing seamen, by taking a survey of the business at the beginning of a war. A Naval armament is first announced to the public by a general embargo on all ships and vessels throughout the ports of the kingdom: to these immediately succeed the issue of press warrants; and reprisals and letters of marque as quickly follow. The last degree of this warlike explosion is when the impress admits of no protection. Here at once the business of the state is in direct hostility to the safety of the subject. The property of the merchant, however valuable that may be, is left to the utmost hazard, and his ships are deserted. Nay, it becomes the interest of the merchant to oppose the efforts of government; and he uses his endeavours to protect his men, to conceal them, or to send them to the interior of the country. But the nature of the duty

which the Naval officer has to perform, is to the last degree disgusting and hazardous, for it gives him not the usual means of protection should he happen to be overpowered.

Now, whatever may be the success of impressment at the beginning of a war, it is not a quick way of manning his Majesty's ships ; and the Naval force is for the first two years of a war unable to achieve any thing important. But the most distressing part of the business is, the unprotected state of our commerce, extended as it is over the whole globe. It must therefore, for the first twelve months, fall an easy prey to the cruisers and privateers of the enemy. In every war, during the continuance of the Impress service, this has been the case : it leaves the merchant also for a length of time to great uncertainty as to the employment of his capital ; or how to direct his adventures. I have known instances of seamen being concealed in the dining rooms and even bed-chambers of their merchants, with a view to evade a press gang. Nay, it has been carried the length of offering bribes to the regulating officer ; and a sum not less than five hundred pounds, has on one occasion been promised, to allow a ship with a valuable cargo on board, to proceed to sea without molestation. In the early period of my own service, in the neighbourhood of a

great trading port, the seamen were accustomed to fortify a village into the form of a garrison, where, to the number of eleven or twelve hundred, they enjoyed themselves in carousal ; part of them armed, and defended by outposts ; and scouts sent abroad, were constantly on the look out. A detachment of marines and seamen, from three King's ships, were landed at midnight, to try to surprise this body ; but their spies were so quick in conveying intelligence, that not one of the number could be secured, the retreat was so precipitate. Such are the stratagems naturally enough opposed to a service that can employ compulsion, where the duty ought to be done by volunteers.

The delay of calling into activity a commanding Naval force, must be of great evil to the country. War can only be undertaken for the purpose of defence, or to redress a wrong. If therefore we should be deluded artfully by negotiation, as we have often been, an enterprising enemy gets the start of us : our colonies are threatened or taken ; our merchant ships are seized in his ports, or captured at sea ; public credit sinks ; and a general alarm pervades the community. How different would be the commencement of hostilities, were our ships manned with volunteers as fast as they could be got ready for commission.

I conceive that the whole mercantile marine of this country, excepting a few ships in India, some South whalers, and traders to the South Seas, are in a home port once in twelve months. Now the proportion of seamen navigating these vessels, which I propose to be employed in manning his Majesty's ships, might be thus converted to public use in eight months ; but the greater part of them in less than four months. By this effective force brought so soon into activity, nameless advantages would accrue to the public, and energy and enter-prise, beyond all precedent, would thereby be infused into our Naval operations. In the first place, from our shores being secured, the coasts of the enemy would be covered with our fleets ; and if he did not send his force out to meet us, it would be blockaded in his own ports. Not only would our own trade be protected, but a host of cruizers would be let loose on merchant vessels of our opponents. Mercantile specula-tion, so necessary for the support of our manu-factories, could calculate with some certainty on its gains ; and thus public credit be kept from falling. But the happiest effects of an active naval warfare would be, the more speedy termination of hostilities, and a more secure peace.

It has always been observed, that the British

seaman beholds the Naval officer with a jealous eye ; and no wonder, while he remembers compulsion to serve in a King's ship is the lot of himself and brethren. But it also reminds him of the great wages he can procure in time of war, from the merchant, provided he can escape the vigilance of a press-gang. Now a volunteer system, founded on legislative authority, would do away all jealousy between the officer and seaman ; the immense expence incurred by desertion, would be saved ; and the merchant would get his ships worked by mariners at moderate wages, instead of the usual exorbitant payment, whether by month or voyage, which has been considered as their right in time of war ; by which means he would be also readily reimbursed for giving up a greater number of his seamen at the beginning of a war. In short, were it not for long usage, that seems to have hardened the feelings of the community with regard to the practice of Impressing, how could it ever be tolerated in a free country ?

Having premised these common place arguments, sufficiently obvious to every capacity to admit the truth of them, I must now request the attention of my readers, who have any interest in this discussion, to a subject connected with it, that is of the first importance to the country.

I turn with reluctance to review the disturbances that took place in the Channel Fleet, in which I served in the summer of 1797, in which Fleet they first began.

It has been commonly believed that the turbulent disposition of the seamen, in the general mutiny, sprang from the convulsed spirit of the times ; and was to be referred in a great measure, to the political discussions which had been excited in this country by the French Revolution. Having been on the spot of duty, during the whole of this eventful business, and having never been interrupted in my office to its conclusion, I am enabled to give a fair and convincing evidence how far disaffection had a share in producing it.

At this period of the war, the fleets of the enemy had been beaten from the face of the sea ; even a solitary cruizer was seldom seen out of port. Small squadrons of our own ships were therefore found sufficient to watch the harbours of France ; and our vessels from being more in port, enabled the men to have greater communication with one another. It has been thought, that seamen are a body of men not capable of much reflection ; and seldom found to act with consistency and decision. This opinion, however, in the present business, was proved to be erroneous. The founders of the

mutiny were men about the middle age, married, and had children. Their families were daily claiming relief from them ; provisions for the two preceding years, 1795 and 1796, had been enormously high, and they found themselves starving. These families contrasted their situation with that of other more fortunate seamen, who had escaped Impressment, and were receiving from the merchants four and five pounds per month, while seamen in the King's ships got only twenty-two shillings and sixpence. How was it possible for men placed in such circumstances, to be insensible to the distresses of their wives and children ; and how were they to be redressed ? The cause was a common one with all married seamen ; and their first deliberations turned entirely upon this point. The army had lately got an additional pay, which excited some jealousy on the part of the sailors. Before resistance of any kind was meditated, they addressed their favourite chief, Admiral Earl Howe, who was then at Bath, having lost the use of his limbs by a severe gout, caused by exposure to cold, during the perilous situation of the fleet in a gale of wind from S. E. in Torbay, in February, 1795. The letter of complaint was written, as if from a single person ; but it met his lordship's attention ; and as no flag-officer of the fleet was

then at Spithead, it was sent to another on the spot, that an inquiry might be made. This enquiry, however, elicited nothing satisfactory; it was even said no complaint existed: but the proper method of detecting the combination was unfortunately not attempted. The seamen again addressed Earl Howe, and complained of his neglecting them. This letter was by his Lordship given to Lord H. Seymour, then a Lord of Admiralty, to be laid before that board. On the part of government no suspicion seemed to have been entertained of the magnitude of the plot. All their deliberations in the ships, were conducted by the seamen with the utmost secrecy, not a single landman or marine being privy to the slightest part of the business. The wife of one of them is said to have given some hint, from which a flag-officer in the neighbourhood, on half-pay, ventured to address the Admiralty, and recommended a melioration of the seamen's pay, as a preventive of discontent. Still nothing was done. Earl Howe was now about to resign the command of the fleet, and was to be succeeded by Admiral Lord Bridport. The fleet was ordered to sea on the 15th April, but when the signal was made to unmoor, the seamen refused to obey their officers. This happened on the day in which Lord Howe's retinue was discharged from the Queen Charlotte; and the

revolt seemed to have some connection with this circumstance. Still the business was in the hands of the able seamen, not a landman or marine being yet engaged; on which account, some officers, among whom were Lord Gardner, and Capt. Domett, proposed resistance to the mutinous spirit, and thought they could carry the ships to sea with the remainder of the ships' company. To this proposal Lord Bridport would not consent, and dispatched intelligence to the Admiralty of what had happened. A board of Admiralty arrived on the third day at Portsmouth, not aware of the activity of the seamen, who in the mean time, gained over the marines and the landmen, by promising them an increase of pay with themselves. The fleet certainly might have been carried to sea, as Lord Gardner and Sir W. Domett suggested, and might at that time have prevented the explosion; but unless government granted full redress to the petition of the men, there was no chance of permanent tranquillity.

The petition sought an increase of 5s. 6d. per month to the pay; the provisions to be served in full weight; the pay not to be stopped when under cure at hospital; and some complaints were made about the sick, and a supply of vegetables.

Had there been any just cause of complaint against the treatment of the sick, it must have been my fault, and that of the surgeons. But this part of the petition was false in the extreme. From my first appointment, to the last hour in which I served in the fleet, my utmost exertions were employed to give the sick all the comforts which a sea-life was capable of. The hospital ship of the fleet was even stored with delicacies, and a bill of fare, such as no hospital in Europe at this moment can equal. Even the supply of vegetables mentioned, was more than anticipated by my own advice two years before, (*vide Med. Nautica, 3 vols.*) In the new medical arrangements of the ships and hospitals, the Admiralty had acted with unbounded benevolence. The scurvy, that scourge of a sea-life, was now annihilated; and in the 20 years of war that have succeeded, not less than one hundred thousand seamen have been saved to the state, which according to the usual ravages of former wars, must have perished by that disease.

When I remonstrated with the delegates, as the leaders of the mutiny stiled themselves, for this part of their conduct, they seemed abashed; and when they saw the comforts which were provided for them in the *Medusa* hospital ship, they were astonished. These complaints

concerning the sick, were therefore never more heard against the service.

By this account it will appear that the original cause of this mutiny was a seaman's grievance, and not to be charged to the leveling doctrines of the times. It was thought by many, that disaffected persons had tampered with the credulity of the men, and excited them to violent measures. This was not apparent in the early proceedings ; and it was well known they had no communications with suspected people on shore. The only letter that was ever received from a distance, came from Bristol. It was written in a fair hand, and signed A British Seaman. This letter was addressed to the delegates of the Royal George ; it pressed the seamen to claim a larger proportion of prize money, which was now in their power, but recommended nothing farther. So far from concealing its contents, they brought it to their officers ; and said, "this is not what we have combined for ; it belongs to the king to dispense prize money, and we will not ask it, though we will be grateful for what is given." This bespoke great moderation, and I believe it to have been their real sentiments.

It is well known that government complied with the petition. The first movers of the mutiny returned to their duty ; but much disorder

sprang up in other departments, and it was some months before all became quiet. It was to be regretted, that another addition was not made to the pay, rather than to increase the provisions ; for previous to this demand, they were abundant for a hard working man ; and the additional quantity has been the cause of much waste and depredation on public property.

Earl Howe bore his majesty's commission as mediator in the disturbances that had happened, with free pardon for past transgression. He tried for the first day to reconcile the men to the few officers they had dismissed. This he found impracticable : in all other parts he succeeded : and it is doubtful that any other person could have effected what he did. Had his lordship been in his usual health when he received the first letter of complaint, he would have immediately repaired to Spithead, and inquired into the grievances complained of ; they would have then been redressed without any convulsion among the seamen.

This mutiny, so novel in its kind, affords a serious lesson to the country. While Britain can command the empire of the seas by her navy, she is secure from assault ; but a dangerous precedent of her seamen throwing off all subjection to their officers, is given at this

crisis ; and it may be again resorted to in future wars, and held up to the example of generations yet to come. It is true the men affected to be loyal ; and declared, should the enemy's fleet put to sea, that they would sail and meet it. Few officers I believe, would like to carry a fleet into battle, under such circumstances of disorganization, for how could the valour of the men be trusted when all discipline had been trod under foot, and mutiny and outrage substituted in its stead ? Had many of the delegates foreseen the horrors which their measures led to, I believe they would never have embarked in the business ; and some of them exhibited signs of the deepest contrition.

I have introduced this occurrence into my narrative, as having its radical cause in our present Naval system ; and while that system remains as it now is, there must be a danger of similar disturbances recurring, and with increased force. It is in the method of recruiting our Navy by Impressment, that the seeds of outrage and insubordination take their growth. The service of a voluntary servant can be depended upon : if there is virtue in character, it can be confided in. But if any body of men are singled out in society, as objects of compulsion, and denied the common privileges of the community to which they

belong, is it not likely that the latent passion of revenge, and resistance, so natural to the human heart, will occasionally burst forth, and confound their oppressors ? But custom, it is said, has sanctioned Impressment. This is not the language of a Briton, whose hereditary right is freedom ; and it can apply to no part of the community. Nay, this subject has, by some, even been denied the privilege of discussion. The seaman is like the victim in sacrifice, that is gilded and decked out to be consumed ; for his valour is blazoned with triumphal songs and feasts, while himself is dragged from his home and his endearments, and ultimately consigned to neglect. Why have feudal service and villainage been abolished by the purer spirit of enlightened laws ; and the person that devotes his days, and seeks his support from a dangerous sea-life, denied the secure pleasures of a house and home ? Nay, it is acknowledged that he is the very bulwark of those laws, of which he himself is refused the protection. Such a doctrine is more than blasphemy to the spirit of British liberty.

If there is one individual more than another in this nation, that deserves peculiar privileges of citizenship, it is the thorough-bred seaman. His duty is of that nature, that it cannot be represented by proxy ; and his qualifications

and acquirements are of the first importance to the state, because they belong only to persons of his own cast. Nautical astronomy, and all its auxiliary branches, may be learned on shore ; even the manual duties of seamanship may be acquired in a short time ; but there may be still wanting that soul of enterprize, that hardihood of frame, that can mock danger, and surmount difficulties in every hideous form ; that can submit to sickness, privation, and famine, without repining at their fate ; and view death itself, in all its most horrid aspects, of a sinking ship, a lee-shore, or wounds in battle. Such are the requisites necessary to form the true-bred British seaman.

Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of human kind pass by.

GOLDSMITH.

I am afraid there has been too often a want of sympathy for his condition, by seeing him in his idle hours of dissipation and low pleasure. His slovenly appearance and awkward gait have, to the beholder's eye, too frequently obliterated all the remembrance of his naval glory ; and the honours of the first of June, of Cape St Vincent, and of the battles of the Nile, Camperdown, Trafalgar, and Algiers, have been at once forgotten, on seeing him stagger

from the bar of a tavern, “*unanointed and unanealed.*” Here indeed is a lesson of humiliation to human pride ; for after having performed the noblest services to his country, when his purse comes to be emptied, he is thrust from the presence of his landlord like a felon, and common pity for the wretched denied him. “*Date obolum Belisario.*”

During the late 20 years of a war remarkable beyond all others, for the expences it occasioned in money and blood ; singular also for the divided and turbulent spirit which convulsed the world, this nation was frequently directed by public proclamations to fasting ; and likewise for thanksgiving, to prostrate ourselves before Almighty God by humiliation for past sins ; and ascribing praise for signal victories. Such national convocations when warmed by the spirit of pure christian devotion, must be the sublimest duty of a great people. But if it happen to degenerate into the mere mummetry of priestcraft ; or be stained by hypocrisy, then it is not better than the leaven of the Pharisees. Charity, we are told, covereth a multitude of sins ; and without charity, your prayers are as a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. Yet while these pious duties were going on, and the pulpit orator descanting on the prowess of our naval heroes, not a word was said of

their helpless and deserted families, compelled to seek refuge in a parish workhouse, or receive from parochial aid a meagre subsistence. Some hundreds of these political sermons have been published ; but not one of them, in the excess of christian compassion, turns a pitying eye to the press-room of a tender ; or implores a sympathizing legislature to put an end to the horrors of Impressment. Is not that condition therefore hard, to which the laws of the country offer no protection ; and which is thus almost excluded from the pale of its religion ?

In 1795, ten thousand landmen were raised in the counties, and eighteen thousand seamen from the mercantile marine, by requisition, to increase the naval force. The landmen received from their respective parishes, very high bounties ; 20, 30, and 40l. were common sums ; and in one instance, 64l. The person who received the last sum, was the only man from his parish ; he was small in size, had a sickly look, was a taylor by trade, and when he was drafted from the guard-ship to another ship, was, with some others, brought forward for survey as an invalid, unfit for service. I asked him what he had done with his large bounty ? To which he answered, that it was kept for his return home, to set him up in business. Although a poor subject, yet as he might be useful in his em-

ployment as a taylor, he was retained. It was unaccountable how our officers could receive such men ; and knowing too, what high bounties had been given. These extraordinary occurrences, so new in naval service, did not pass unnoticed by the seamen. The sensations of disgust which they excited, were pointed and strong. “What,” said they, “shall these taylors and coblers be receiving their fifty pounds, “ while we are doomed to take five ?” This business was never forgotten ; the wound festered, and had its share in producing the discontents in 1797. The true-bred seaman is a high-minded being. In his lounge, or forecastle walk, he views the landman in the Waist, as an inferior animal, and the latter soon learns to know the depression of his species. The seaman, therefore, looks with a jealous eye at every favour conferred on the clod-hopper, as done at the expence of his own acquirements. Such were the rankling effects of these exorbitant premiums to the landed volunteer ; and great was their influence in exciting the general mutiny of 1797 !

The very name of a *Press Gang* carries in it something opprobrious : it is revolting to the feelings of a Briton ; for no man who values personal security to himself, can see it violated in another without detestation. It sounds in

our ears like the threats of an Inquisition ; and when it extends its excursions beyond its usual rambles, like the visitations of some wild beast, it spreads terror throughout the neighbourhood. Even the person who was never at sea, is sometimes made its prey ; for like all ferocious acts of unconstitutional power, it calls into its vortex an host of spies and informers, and gives birth to scenes of violence and outrage, that disgrace the public service. Thus, while the hunted seaman is ferreted out of his shelter and concealment like a thief or a felon, it too often happens that the unoffending citizen is also exposed to the most brutal treatment.

To the Naval officer himself, no task is so disgusting,—no duty so irksome ; for it poisons every noble idea of the man and the gentleman. The seeds of jealousy are thus sown between him and the seaman on their first acquaintance ; and they lose that regard for one another, which would otherwise soften the asperities of command and obedience. The service of the seaman not being a voluntary act on his part, he never forgets the wish to deceive, and to desert, whenever he can do it with safety to escape. This keeps alive the suspicion of the officer, and is a constant source of irritation between them. Impressment cannot be called

the fault of the Naval officer ; it is a vice in the policy of the country ; and till it is done away, it is vain to think of purifying the Naval code of discipline from severity. Make the seaman a free agent in the contract of his servitude, and he will soon obtain the confidence of his officer, and repay it with fidelity and gratitude. He will plan no more mutinies by secret machinations ; and if he finds himself aggrieved, he will prefer an open petition to his commander, and seek to obtain redress by regular means, through the proper channel. Such is the tenor of service with free minds. The officer will then have a double pleasure in redressing a wrong, or conferring a favour ; because the man can no longer have an interest in deceiving him. It is a fact, well known to all acquainted with Naval service, that whatever quarrels or bickerings may be found in the family affairs of a ship's company, if I may use such an expression, no sooner is the common enemy in sight, and the signal made for battle, than a mutual exchange of forgiveness bursts from every heart ; and from that hour, every soul on board regards his ship-mates with a friendship that is not to be surpassed in any department of human life. I have seen instances of separation between men and officers in some King's ships, that would furnish themes

of panegyric equal to any thing recorded in history. It would do honour to the political institutions of the country, to encourage these heroic friendships by every means ; for they soften the hardships of a sea-life, and give birth to the noblest exploits. Pity and compassion have been said to be the best characteristics of genuine valour. Is it not, therefore, deeply to be regretted, that any thing should be allowed to remain in our Maritime System, that tends to counteract the operation of such exalted virtues ? How often has the generous spirit of benevolence in these kingdoms been exemplified, by petitions to parliament, to abolish particular customs of cruelty and injustice, as in the case of the slave trade, the sweep, &c., while the sensibility of the country has been dead to the condition of the Impressed Sailor ? Why is the British merchant so torpid in this business, when the evil in time of war is every day brought under his review, and his own interests so inseparably connected with the men in his employment ? The lot of the seaman is therefore marked by a species of indifference and neglect, that is not to be met with in any other portion of our free community. I repeat it again ; instead of the seaman being made an object of disregard, he ought to possess privileges and immunities beyond every other class of his Majesty's subjects. The soldier can be

perfected in his exercise in a few days ; and it little avails what kind of trade he has been employed in ; but no person will have the hardihood to contend, that a seaman's duty can be learned in less than seven years, or after twenty-one years of age. He must be accustomed to it from boyhood ; for no adult being can ever be brought to endure the privations, dangers, and hardships, which are inseparable from a sea-life. To the honour of the Navy be it told, that I have never known an officer who would not sooner close with the muzzles of an enemy's guns, than board a merchantman to impress the crew. So revolting to all of them is this duty.

I have thus described what may be called the *moral deformities* of the Impress practice ; imposing duties on the officer, at which his heart recoils, and inflicting hardships on the seaman, from which he cannot save himself, his wife, and his children, by any means within his power. I will now turn my attention to the *physical evils* to which Impression gives birth.

It is the lot of those brought up to sea, to be exposed to many distempers, of which the generality of mankind can form no idea. In East Indiamen, and all vessels traversing the southern ocean, now a common track for our marine, but especially in south whalers, from their long

deprivation of vegetables, they are liable to severe attacks of scurvy. Indeed seamen in merchant ships of every kind, opposed in the passage by contrary winds, or detained at sea by other causes, are often victims to this maritime scourge. The merchants have not followed the example of the navy in preventing scurvy, as might be easily done, and at a small expence. Now all seamen returning from foreign voyages, are, to a certainty, more or less affected by a scorbutic taint; and a short recreation on shore, and respite from sea-service, is necessary to them all. It is true, the navy is now fully prepared for combating all degrees of this once fatal malady; but there is a despondency of spirit, a kind of physical cowardice, that accompanies, and is more or less its inseparable attendant; so that even although the bodily complaint may be cured, the mental depression may degenerate into another indisposition equally hazardous, when the seaman finds himself disappointed in the object of his hopes, the sight of his family and friends. Indeed such is the nature of animal life, and the laws by which it is governed, that after exhaustion of every species, whether from the fatigues of war, long voyages, or excessive anxiety of mind, there is a necessity for recruit and refreshment of body, and ease and relaxation for

the mind, in order to preserve activity, strength of muscular power, and mental energy, for the purpose of devising enterprize, and securing its successful issue.

The pure debility of frame, and emaciation of body, from scarcity of provisions, and deficient nourishment in a long voyage, are often the lot of the seaman, independent of all disease. To be compelled to return to sea for an indefinite term, must therefore be considered as a great severity ; and such a condition must pave the way to disorders of the most afflicting kind. Make him a volunteer, and his entry to one of his Majesty's ships would become a great blessing : but what can cure the mind diseased, and the hatred of Impressment ?

In the treatment of venereal complaints, seamen are often dreadful sufferers. Their ignorance and credulity make them the prey of a host of quacks who infest all sea ports. Here is an exception to the general effect, for the sailor often enters the navy, to get cured of his disease. Indeed in the King's ship, the treatment of all venereal affections is more successfully conducted than is to be met with anywhere else, even in private practice ; so great are the advantages of having the patient immediately under the eye of the surgeon.

Merchant seamen are among the frequent

sufferers from yellow fever, dysentery, &c. the mortal diseases of tropical climates. After recovery from these complaints, a respite from sea duty is always desirable: to be returned immediately to a warm climate is a hard fate. The remittent fever and intermittent of the African coast are very fatal to seamen; and recovery from them, even on returning to Europe, is always slow. The hepatitis, or liver disease of the East Indies, is often a most obstinate complaint. Seamen who have undergone a long mercurial course for the cure, have, like all other sufferers, a lingering convalescence. Such diseases as now named shake the human frame to its deepest recesses; and as a ship affords but slender accommodation, the desire of re-visiting home, and the hope of enjoying it, keep up the sinking spirit, when every thing else seems to fail. Those, who like myself, have passed through this fiery ordeal of tropical fever, will know what sympathy is due to a fellow sufferer.

While the practice of Impressment remains as the only resource for manning the Royal Navy, in the home ports, chiefly, the seaman is exposed to a species of trial, that can befall no other part of the community. In time of war he can have no resting place; for even in the moment that he thinks himself in safety, by

admiralty protection, an order may arrive to impress every man without reserve. He is watched in every corner ; his retreats are searched for, and he is hunted out of them like a wild beast. He is thus doomed to suffer all the inclemency of season, cold, rain, frost and snow ; often half naked, and his bed damp clothes, or the wet ground. If he be found, he is hurried to the tender, where, by form of service, which the officer cannot depart from, he must submit to confinement, and be closed up in the Press-room. If the impressed sailor is not provided with clothing and bedding, his lot may become still worse ; for the officer of a tender has it not always in his power to supply these articles ; they are commonly not issued till the man is sent to the ship where he is to remain. The crowded tender, under such circumstances, becomes a nest of infection. Fevers of the contagious kind are thus generated, and spread to other ships. It is no uncommon thing for a receiving ship to have 12 or 15 hundred men ; too often accumulated for the vile purpose of swelling the purser's balance bill. In some published letters of advice to young officers, written by the late gallant Lord Rodney, he warns the future officer against this shameful crowded state of the receiving ship, and speaks of it being done to serve the purser. The

practice I hope is now forbidden by authority. It was once my fortune to incur the severe displeasure of a port admiral, by informing my commander in chief, that there were eleven hundred disposable men in the receiving ship, while many ships of the fleet were short of complement.

Obstinate and incurable rheumatisms, one of the prevailing diseases of seamen, are to be often dated from Impressment, and become a plentiful source for fraud and deception, to procure a discharge. Other inflammatory diseases, such as pneumonia, are to be often traced to the exposure to severe weather, in tenders passing to King's ports. Catarrhs of the worst kind, and ophthalmias, are frequent complaints in this afflicting catalogue.

The contagious typhus fever is the chief production of the Impress Service on the home station ; for here all its predisposing and exciting causes are to be found. Dejection of spirits, even to despair, exposure to cold and tempestuous weather, sleeping on deck without a bed, no change of clothing, closed and confined lodging, charged with impure exhalations, and air vitiated by respiration, to a certainty give birth to a contagion, that is spread through every ship where impressed men, under such circumstances, may be distributed. Such is

the constant history of all crowded tenders and receiving ships. The officers of a receiving ship at one of the out-ports,* fell upon the expedient of constructing a press-room, after the model of the tender, to secure impressed men ; and the immediate consequence was, severe typhus fever, that was carried by the drafted seamen to a number of other ships.

Now this medical history of Impressment comes entirely within the cognizance of the medical officer, and is confined to him alone. No part of his instructions tells him to report how far the Impress System is hurtful to health. But still less of these horrors is known or considered by a Board of Admiralty, or a Cabinet of Ministers. These evils have been common occurrences for ages, and fill their niche in the general catalogue of the miseries of war, without exciting inquiry for correction, and also without bringing down commiseration.

In the early part of my own service, such were the ravages of scurvy, that half a ship's company has frequently perished from it ; yet, dreadful as was this mortality, it passed without leading to relief, and was not even thought worthy of being recorded as a misfortune to the nation, though the ship might remain in-

* Liverpool.

active for months, till fresh men were brought by the Impress Tender to fill up her complement. Now that this disease has been compleatly subdued in the Navy since 1795, were such an occurrence to happen, it would excite universal horror ; for surgeons and officers of the present day have no idea of such disasters recurring. Those who are curious to learn the particulars of this sudden and effectual relief from scurvy, may peruse the Second Edition of my “*OBSERVATIONS ON SCURVY,*” and compare the prescribed means of prevention and cure with the measures which I adopted in 1795-6, when a general scurvy pervaded every ship on the home station ; and they will be surprized by the simplicity of the practice, that such things were never performed before.* I do not despair of similar feelings following the compleat abolition of the Impress Service.

I trust it has been proved, that the practice of Impressing is impolitic for the interests of

* Vide *Medicina Nautica*, Vols. i. ii. & iii. Article Scurvy, in each. Hufeland, the illustrious Hufeland, Archiater to the King of Prussia, personally unknown to me, was pleased to honour the German translation of this work with a preface. He says, “It unquestionably ranks among the best productions of English Medical Literature.” Translated by Dr Werner, of Jena, no less celebrated in gen~~e~~ science.

the united imperial kingdoms, repugnant to the honourable feelings of the officer, and cruel and unjust to the seaman. Let me now turn to contemplate a more pleasing picture, the “Practicable Plan” of Manning his Majesty’s Navy by volunteers.

In the first volume of “*MEDICINA NAUTICA*,” published in January, 1797, page 43, the following opinion is given on the subject of

RAISING MEN FOR THE NAVY.

“ The experience collected on this subject,
“ during the present war, entirely corresponds
“ with the account of numerous evils related
“ on former occasions. They must be inevi-
“ table till a new system is adopted. A coun-
“ try that boasts so justly of her civil rights,
“ ought long ago to have rescued from an in-
“ voluntary engagement, a description of peo-
“ ple, to whom she owes her greatness in the
“ scale of empire. I am afraid that men high
“ in office have a very limited idea of the
“ afflictions occasioned by impressing seamen.
“ Instead of calling it a necessary and politic
“ measure, for the safety of the country, I
“ pronounce it a most fatal and impolitic prac-
“ tice. It is the cause of more destruction to

“ the health and lives of our seamen, than all
“ other causes put together, and every nerve
“ of invention ought to be strained, to put a
“ speedy and effectual check to it.

“ We have at last found an alternative for
“ pressing : the ‘*requisition*’ of seamen and
“ landmen for the navy, which was made in
“ the spring of 1795, by act of parliament,
“ brought into the house of commons by Mr
“ Pitt, has formed a precedent that ought to be
“ imitated on every future emergency. I am
“ only sorry that this act was not made perma-
“ nent, so as to enable ministers to call upon
“ the counties and towns, whenever a levy of
“ men was found necessary. There is not an
“ objection of any force, to be offered against
“ a repetition of this kind : and had the officers
“ who regulated the volunteers, been some-
“ what more attentive in examining them,
“ there remains no doubt, but it would have
“ effected all that was wished for the good of
“ the public service. At some places, very
“ high bounties were given, even to *forty*
“ guineas, which were the cause of much fraud
“ and imposition : men utterly unfit for duty,
“ but with no apparent disease, entered for the
“ sake of this sum ; and after being a few
“ weeks or months on board, discovered their
“ complaints to get invalidated. It was particu-

“ larly hard to press an able seaman, after such
“ high bounties had been given to landmen ; for
“ these and the king’s bounty bear no compa-
“ rison.

“ In the beginning of a war, if we suppose
“ the peace establishment to be twenty thousand
“ men ; sixty thousand more may be raised by
“ requisition, in the like manner, and in the
“ space of four months ; by which means
“ seventy sail of the line, with a proportion of
“ smaller vessels, would be ready to strike a
“ blow before any enemy could be prepared to
“ face us.

“ The evils of Impressing are manifold : a
“ great number of our best seamen immediately
“ disappear at the beginning of a war, and con-
“ ceal themselves. It requires some time to
“ get ships and tenders ready ; the people are
“ crowded together ; they sleep on the decks ;
“ they are without clothes to shift themselves ;
“ persons of all denominations are huddled to-
“ gether in a small room ; and the first twelve
“ months of a war afford a mournful task for
“ the medical register, in the spreading of
“ infection, and sickly crews. Hence a newly
“ commissioned fleet of ships can never be
“ deemed an effective force at the early com-
“ mencement of hostilities.

“ In a country like this, where so large a

“ proportion of the people are employed in
“ manufactories of different kinds, it is the first
“ effect of a war to throw many of them out of
“ employment. The only resource is the Navy
“ and Army. We must suppose, that men of
“ this description, at least, who are married
“ and have children, leave a situation where
“ they have had enjoyments, and have to look
“ forward to one where these blandishments
“ are to have no share ; consequently they
“ must feel those pangs of separation at leaving
“ a virtuous charge, which are natural to hu-
“ man beings. This affecting tale needs not
“ the language of romance to find its way to
“ feeling hearts ; but must now and then be
“ aggravated to the most poignant distress, by
“ resigning wives and children to beggary and
“ want, and a thousand ills of which I can
“ form no idea. Hence that dejection of spirit
“ which makes them the first subjects for the
“ scurvy, and the earliest victims to contagious
“ diseases. Many a melancholy story is thus
“ related to the medical attendant of a sailor
“ or soldier, and it begets a sympathy that
“ interests us the more for their recovery.
“ Under this species of mental affliction, we
“ know that numbers perish without any appa-
“ rent disorder.

“ Now, if these people were all levied by the

“ requisition bill, their bounties would be so
“ considerable, that a moiety could be left for
“ the support of their connections, which I
“ know was very generally the case on the late
“ occasion ; and it tends to alleviate the pain
“ of separation. The poor landman receives a
“ bounty of twenty or thirty shillings, which
“ buys his first jacket : he probably passes
“ through two receiving ships, and three or
“ four tenders, before he arrives at the ship-
“ where he is to be stationary. By this time
“ fresh slops are wanted ; and the first year of
“ his servitude does not put a shilling in his
“ pocket.. Very different is it with a requisi-
“ tion man: he can be trusted to march by
“ land, and go to a King’s port at once, with-
“ out incurring diseases from the passage in a
“ tender. He also considers himself a volun-
“ teer, and feels nothing to depress his mind,
“ or to prevent him from accommodating him-
“ self to the customs of a new situation..

“ It may be said, that high bounties were a
“ heavy tax upon individuals ; but if we were
“ to calculate the vast saving of human lives,
“ and the money spent in raising men under
“ other modes, it will be found the very quint-
“ essence of economy. But, putting that out
“ of the question, what a trifle ought it to be
“ reputed, when it prevents an Englishman

" from being Impressed, and makes him a volunteer in the service of the public. I must, therefore, congratulate the country on the efficacy of Mr Pitt's bill, and hope to see it made permanent. My authority ought to give some weight to the repetition ; for I have seen much of its good effects, and have often witnessed the horrors of the old system." *

I give the whole of this article from the first volume of " MEDICINA NAUTICA," in order that my sentiments in 1795, may be compared with what they are now, on this important inquiry. It must be told, that the state of Europe in February, 1795, was growing every day more critical. The severe frost of that winter had facilitated the entrance of the French into Holland, by freezing the canals and rivers ; and the whole country in the space of a few weeks, submitted to their arms ; while the British force had to retreat northwards, and embarked at Bremen, after suffering the most dreadful hardships. This conquest and territory, gave to the enemy an immense line of sea-coast, opposite to our shores ; and with possession of the Dutch navy, they might have it in their power to threaten or effect a descent on England.

* My work was written towards the close of 1796, some months before the general mutiny.

Such were the disasters of this campaign, when the ministry formed the plan to augment the naval force. At this time a number of the larger East Indiamen were purchased by government, and fitted as ships of the line. To man these additional ships, made Mr Pitt bring forward his requisition bill.

This bill was therefore to be merely considered as a business of emergency, or state expedient for a temporary purpose; it was to have no progressive operation, or repetition at any future period.

It is remarkable that a bill of this kind, so novel in its principle, excited so little discussion, either in parliament, or out of it. The only allusion made to the Impress service, by Mr Pitt, was, on the delay it would occasion in raising the men, which made him prefer the mode by “*requisition*.” Even the merchant and ship-owner, on whom the burthen fell, submitted without repining at the extraordinary expence. It is true the ship-owners were now reaping a vast harvest from the transport department; the favours of which were extended to all the great mercantile sea-ports. The golden showers which fell from the transport employment, no doubt silenced much of that opposition which would have appeared against the measure; and the Tyne and the

Wear, as well as the Thames and the Humber, strained their echoes, in “*pious orgies*,” to the name of the heaven-born minister.*

* Newcastle is distinguished by a Pitt and a Fox Club: the author has not the honour to be a member of either. The one is remarkable for its short speeches; the other for its long orations. The quantity of port allowed at both, is much the same: French wines are excluded; from *patriotism*, by the one party; but, from a *love of economy* in the other. Which club is likely to be most permanent, is by some thought doubtful. It is but a cold task, to be thanking the memory of a great man for *past favours*, when he has no more to bestow; and gratitude is not the most durable passion of the human heart; therefore some think the Pittites will dissolve first. The tenor of the Foxites being avowed opposition, a very obstinate spring for action with mankind, would seem to promise a longer continuance. A third opinion rests on the probability of a coalition of political parties, such as often happens in the higher world; and like the daily mixture of cloud and sunshine in our variable physical atmosphere, will excite no surprise. The Peace of Europe, and the Holy Alliance will then be toasted in French Claret and Burgundy, as testifying good will to mankind; and followed by the tune of “*AULD-LANG-SYNE*,” on the union pipes; while John Bull, as usual, shall pay the piper. Nevertheless, although occasionally libelled by both ministers and opposition, this devoted country, “*this Isle of Isles, this gem set in the silver sea*,” has flourished, flourishes now, and will continue to flourish, in despite of the blunders of the one, and the prophecies of the other, by the pure energies of its free constitution, and the matchless enterprize, industry and ingenuity, of a brave and loyal population. “*Sic Deus faxit.*” Let us therefore in christian

The “*requisition*” bill also met with support from Mr Fox, and his friends. Indeed Mr Fox uniformly stood forward in supporting all naval measures, as being the constitutional force of the country. In the navy itself, it excited but little general attention. This was not the case with myself; for I watched its progress through both houses of parliament with the most anxious care, and I continued my vigilance till I saw the full operation of its principle. I hailed this bill as introducing a new era to the navy of the country; and what was to give it the only stability it wanted, the voluntary service of the seamen. The principle of the bill being compleat, it was easy to foresee what correction would be necessary to render it perfect in practice. The seamen already in service would not have complained of the large bounty given to the new men, had the bill been made permanent, to put a final stop to Impressing; but finding it was only temporary, the large sums given to landmen occasioned general discontent.

The facility with which this bill passed, and the little animadversion it brought forth, is

charity, hope, that the departed spirits of the two illustrious statesmen, are rather employed in *guardian offices* to us, than in fomenting divisions, in the land which they both so dearly loved!

another proof how indifferent public opinion has been about the condition of the seamen, or whether they were pressed or voluntarily entered the service. Not a writer, historian, or commentator on the events of the war, has thought the principle of it worthy of remark ; or whether it was capable of doing what is the avowed purpose of this inquiry to prove. I seem to have stood alone in the discussion, unsupported by one, either in or out of public office.

I fully expected when the war broke out in 1803, that a “*requisition*” would be made for manning the navy with volunteers, and putting an end to Impressment. Mr Addington, now Lord Sidmouth, was then minister ; and had been in the cabinet with Mr Pitt, for many years, and at the time the bill passed. Yet he seemed never to have given it a thought. When Mr Pitt came into power soon after, he never appeared to entertain a single thought of reviving a “*requisition* ;” a proof that he thought the abolition of Impressment not practicable. Such an intention was not expressed by himself as having ever been among the deliberations of his administration. The present ministers have never given the country reason to believe that they meant to abolish Impressing.

Mr Pitt only looked to the mercantile marine of England and Scotland, for his present sup-

ply. He estimated the tonnage of the ships thereto belonging, at 1,400,000 tons ; the seamen at 100,000 ; being one man to fourteen tons. He proposed to take one seaman out of every seven ; or, instead of that, two landmen. No proportion was to be required from vessels under thirty-five tons burthen ; which, as employed in the coasting trade, were continually fitting ; but above that number, up to seventy, every vessel was to find one landman ; and every one up to 105, to find one seaman or two landmen ; and all above 140 tons, to find one landman progressively for every fifty tons. The whole number which might be obtained in this way, he computed at between 18 and 20,000. He proposed also to raise men from every parish ; from which, he thought, 10,000 men might be obtained, supposing 10,000 parishes, each to find one. The mode of arranging what each parish should raise, he would leave to the justices of the peace, at a special sessions holden for the purpose; providing only that a larger sum than should be adequate to the bounty given to the volunteers, should be levied on every parish which should be a defaulter. He further proposed raising a certain number of men from those employed in inland navigation ; but could not ascertain the probable amount of this supply till he had procured a list of the barges.

One other measure he proposed, which was, to enable the magistrates to apprehend all idle and disorderly persons, who might be able to serve his Majesty.

Such are the outlines of this celebrated bill, and the first attempt of the kind ever made. It will be observed by Naval officers, that this bill does not accurately fix the just proportion which seamen bear to landmen in his Majesty's ships. Care should be taken in a general "*requisition*" like this, that the due proportion should be levied. A ship of 74 guns, with a complement of 600 men, ought to have 400 seamen, 100 landmen, and 100 marines.

Mr Pitt, in his proposal for sending idle and disorderly persons to the Navy, instead of degrading the service, paid the discipline of it a compliment. From what I have known, for a number of years, of the internal economy of his Majesty's ships, I will venture to say, a bad character has there a better chance of being reformed, than in any penitentiary in the kingdom. The custom of stigmatizing discharged seamen, as committing robberies and house-breakings, has no foundation in truth. It is common for thieves to assume the sailor's garb, because it is a good mode of disguise; but these wolves soon throw off the sheep's clothing, when they have finished their crime. Besides,

the records of the courts of justice deny the fact of seamen having been often guilty of these depredations on society.

I apprehend the following table exhibits a fair account of the present state of our mercantile marine, at home and abroad. I shall, however, for form's sake, take it at even numbers, in order to make a proper distribution of the seamen.

Some definition may be required of what is to be considered an able seaman, as commonly taken in his Majesty's ships. The common acceptation is a man fit for all parts of the manual duty of a seaman. He can take the helm, or conn the ship; he can knot and splice, hand and reef, stow a hold, &c.; and is expected to have been bred to these employments from a boy.

	<i>Ships.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Men.</i>
England.....	17,548	1,352,968	135,060
Scotland.....	2,988	266,536	18,995
Ireland.....	1,178	65,229	5,681
Plantations....	3,775	279,643	16,859
Guernsey.....	65	7,237	494
Jersey	77	7,992	636
Isle of Man....	369	9,335	2,315
 Total.....	26,000	1,988,940	180,040

This table is certainly a flattering statement of the mercantile marine of the united kingdoms and colonies. It is a poor compliment to the spirit and policy of the country, that, possessing in the employment of her merchants 180,000 seamen, recourse should still be had to Impressment for Manning her Royal Navy!

The number of men that I deem adequate to Manning the Royal Navy, is as follows. In the present state of Europe, even if all the maritime powers were to unite against us, this supply would be sufficient ; but this number is not to be the only resource of the country. My plan is, to put it in the power of government, to increase the Naval quota, as may be found necessary for the public service.

Present peace establishment, including

marines	-	-	-	-	-	20,000
Seamen to be raised	-	-	-	-	-	60,000
Landmen and marines	-	-	-	-	-	30,000
Inland navigation	-	-	-	-	-	3,000
						<hr/>
						113,000

The fifteen thousand of the peace establishment, are expected to be prime seamen, and experienced in the duty of a King's ship ; that in the event of a war breaking out, they might

serve to supply new commissioned ships with petty officers, such as gunners, boatswain's and carpenter's mates, &c. so necessary for the compleat formation of a ship's company.

The marines also of the peace establishment, as being experienced soldiers, are expected to become serjeants, corporals, &c. in order to bring new recruits into order and discipline.

It is also intended by the plan under consideration, that all future peace establishments shall be raised by it, as soon as an armament, or a war shall cease.

The seamen and marines of the *peace establishment* without landmen, shall be raised for three years, for five years, and for seven years. At the end of each period, when the men are discharged, there shall be a fresh "*requisition*" to fill up the number.

These men shall receive a bounty, proportioned to the time they may be engaged.* If any of them wish to remain, being serviceable, this shall be permitted.

The proportion of seamen to be raised for the *war establishment*, is one out of three of the whole mercantile marine: or about three for every 100 tons. Vessels of 20 tons shall be exempted: but three vessels of 25 tons each, shall

* A small bounty is customary in recruiting the army, even in peace.

unite and find one seaman : and three of 30 tons, shall be joined to find two seaman, and so in proportion for all ships under 100 tons.

I calculate, that the inland navigation employs 9000 bargemen ; and could give 3000. This number is probably much below the mark.

Ships being short of complement on foreign stations, shall receive the proportion of seamen from the vessels belonging to our colonies.

Every ship, before clearing out at the custom-house, shall have brought forward her proportion of seamen, who shall be duly regulated and examined by a post-captain and naval surgeon. If the port at which the men are raised is near any of the naval ports, conduct-money shall be paid them. But if at a distance, King's ships shall convey them. If the volunteer seamen wish to leave any part of their bounty money to their families, this shall be made known, before they quit their own port ; and it shall be afterwards remitted. But no bounty shall be paid till the seaman is entered in one of his Majesty's ships. These forms shall apply also to the landman and marine.

The *war complement* of seamen, marines, and landmen, shall be engaged for the term of five years. Should the war continue longer than five years, they shall receive another bounty of half their former sum, which second bounty

shall be paid by government, not by the ship-owner, or parish.

The seamen and marines of the peace establishment, when war commences, shall have their bounty increased to the war bounty; and they shall be engaged for the same term of five years as the others; and at the expiration of five years, if war continues, they shall have the same second bounty as those of the war establishment, and be discharged at the cessation of hostilities, in all respects as the war quota.

The age of the whole shall be fixed. A young man of 19, having been five years in the merchant service, shall be deemed an able seaman. And none shall be taken above 40, or at most 42 years of age. The marines and landmen, shall be from 17 to 36, and able-bodied. Two boys well grown shall pass for a man; and if 16 years old, three of them shall pass for two men.

The *maximum of bounty* for seamen, shall be fixed at sixteen guineas; and seven guineas for marines and landmen. The former to be paid by the merchant or ship-owner; the latter by the parish where the marine or landman may be raised. Should an armament take place, and not terminate in hostilities; in such a case, it would be proper for government to reimburse

the merchant a third, one-half, or two-thirds of the sum given as bounty to the seamen, as circumstances may indicate.

When by deaths or other causes the full complement of ships is deficient, a fresh "*requisition*" shall be made from the United Kingdom at large, not from the port or parish to which the deceased men may have belonged. Thus, if 5,000 seamen were required, after one or two years, to compleat the deficient ships companies, which would be one-twelfth part, then would one seaman be drawn from every 400 tons, which would be a small proportion. The merchants and ship-owners at the respective ports shall, among themselves, fix upon the mode of raising this quota. But it would appear, that the method by ballot would best suit the parishes, as done for the militia, and to be under the authority of the justices of the peace at the quarter sessions. Substitutes should be allowed also, as in the militia.

The plan of a general "*requisition*" would be the means of equalizing the number of seamen, in proportion to the tonnage of the respective sea-ports. This, hitherto, has not been the case. Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow, Greenock, and the smaller ports in that line of coast, never yet contributed their full proportion of seamen in any war ; because more seldom visited by his Majes-

ty's ships ; while the burthen of supplying the Navy fell proportionably hard on the Eastern and Channel Ports. This fact may be relied on ; for it is notorious, that the ports of Newcastle and Sunderland have, in all wars, contributed double their quota ; their vessels being much exposed from the coasting trade.

Our plan of bringing forth a great number of men in a short time, would require great discernment and activity on the part of the Naval officers, who are to examine the volunteers. This was one of the great defects of Mr Pitt's requisition. I remember a similar objection to five thousand volunteers, voted by the Irish parliament in 1782, for the navy. This office ought to be filled by captains and surgeons, taken from the active part of service ; who also shall return to their ships, when this duty is finished, that if necessary, they may see the effects of their inspection, and answer for their duty. I think this branch of Naval service has often fallen to improper persons, who have more studied their own comforts, than the public good. *Verbum sat est.*

Having taken Mr Pitt's “*requisition*” bill of 1795, as the groundwork of my plan, I claim the privilege of taking shelter under so great a name, for many of its imperfections. But if Mr Pitt's bill, as a temporary matter of state

expediency, not only met with no opposition, but was supported with unanimous opinion in and out of parliament, how much more have I a right to expect a favourable reception to the measure now proposed, when it is to abolish a custom disgraceful to the policy of the nation, disgusting to the honourable feelings of naval officers, and cruel and unjust to the seamen, who are considered the defenders of the country, and the bulwark of its liberty.

It is the character of war to let loose all the furious passions among mankind. Man forgets that he is a civilized being ; forgets what he owes to his God, his neighbour, and himself. It can only be justified when it is defensive, and to repel aggression. In a constitution of government like our own, where the people have so large a share, our own wars may be said to be always defensive. To undertake war on this principle, should be to unite ourselves earnestly in the common cause ; and to consolidate the national force, for annoying with due effect the power of the enemy. Our insular situation points out our fleets, as being most likely to answer this purpose ; and a naval war has always been a popular one. Whatever contributes to the perfection of a naval system, ought to be cultivated with peculiar care ; our co-operation should be like members of the same family ;

all private animosity forgotten in the general welfare. I trust the plan I have now sketched, is a step to condense or concentrate the national opinion to one object. It will tend to remove completely all contentions and asperities of temper between the officer and those under his command, which, on numberless occasions, have led to the most disastrous consequences. The merchant and ship-owner become the mediator between the country and the seaman, in the contract for his servitude, and pay his retaining fee: and they have the first interest at stake, in procuring the state an effective servant. Their ships are allowed to sail without embargo, which prevents all demurrage, the most serious clog upon trade. Their speculations and adventures are carried on with greater certainty of success; and they can calculate with more surety on their ultimate profits. This plan will prevent seamen's wages from being exorbitant; a great part of which, during hostilities, must go into the pockets of foreigners, and be carried abroad. If the merchant is taxed with a heavy bounty, in order to encourage a part of his men to serve their country, he becomes immediately benefited by it, from the rapid equipment of a commanding Naval force to protect his trade, and preserve convoys from the enemy. He also knows how to indemnify

himself for this tax, by raising the price of his freight, and the value of the goods which he exports or imports ; so that in the end the increase falls upon the community at large. His interest and his duty thus unite, to make him give his full support to government in this national struggle. A bounty, moderately high, enables the seaman to leave something to his family, and to fit himself out for a King's ship ; two circumstances necessary to the credit of the country. By the manner of his engagement, he cannot fail to wish for preserving his character, that he may return to the port where he entered with a pure reputation ; which, from the testimonials he may bring with him from his officers, will ensure him future employment and lasting respect. A faithful register of all volunteers should be sent from the place of entry. This should include the name, age, county, and parish, description, &c. of person, where he has served, and all other particulars of importance. Such a record will be a check to desertion, and preserve the love of country and character among them.

I have introduced the Marine corps into this requisition, which did not form a part of Mr Pitt's bill. This force is so intimately connected with the Navy, and forms so integral a part of it, that a Plan for Manning the Royal Navy

could not be called compleat, were the Royal Marines left out. Besides, this corps has, on all occasions, nobly supported our Naval glory. The injury which the public service sustains, by embarking any part of the army in King's ships, has been justly complained of. It divides the officers and privates of a regiment, and imposes a duty upon them to which they have not been accustomed, and which can never be made agreeable. Our plan will effectually put an end to this business, so foreign to the regular duty of the army, by bringing into immediate training the full establishment of marines ; in three months at most, this may be effected. As this body of men is now divided into four divisions, at Chatham, Woolwich, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, and being brought into discipline, by incorporating the recruits with the old soldiers, they become fit for embarkation in a very short time.

I have preferred the mode of ballot for the marines and landmen, because this is already the mode of raising the militia ; but I have no objection to the mode adopted by Mr Pitt's bill ; only a larger bounty would be required, which would give cause for complaint. The number of marines and landmen, that are wanted, being together only 30, or 35,000, at most, bear so small a proportion to the population of

Britain and Ireland, that they can be brought forward with the utmost facility and dispatch.

The abolition of the Impress practice being founded on giving due encouragement to the volunteer, I would propose that the period of service which entitles the seaman to the pension, should be shortened. A war seldom can last so long as to bring a man up to the number of years required. On this account the naval pension list for seamen, can never be numerous. It should also be remembered, from the severity of their employment, they are not of long life ; few of them live to be old. I therefore think, that two years ought to be deducted for every able seaman ; but if he can produce certificates that he has served seven years as an apprentice, three years of this term should be counted as if served in the Navy. The pension list is the great hope of servitude ; every man in public service, should be taught to look forward to it. It is this act of benevolence in the government, that has put an end to the mendicity of seamen ; those objects of compassion, whether from real distress or idle habits, are now seldom to be seen in the streets. With equal benevolence, government has regulated the pension for wounds and hurts. But the business of doing good can never be complete till Impressment is finally stopped : by charity

you pity the misfortunes of the seaman ; while by emancipating him from the slavery of the Impress, you do him an honour, and he rises in his own estimation.

Besides what I have just said concerning the pensions, much has been done to meliorate the condition of the men in King's ships. Not only has the pay been greatly increased, but care has been taken to make regular remittances to their families, in a manner that be-speaks a regard truly paternal on the part of government. The provisions have for the last two wars been improved to the utmost. Articles of the first quality are supplied to the Navy, and the choice of the public markets is made for the consumption of his Majesty's ships. Nothing inferior, or unwholesome, is served up in diet ; and the whole conduct of the victualling department has been most praise-worthy. The modes of service established there, cannot degenerate under the present commissioners.

No less attention and humanity in the medical arrangements, have been exercised towards the seamen since 1793, compared with former times. In the sick-bed they have been fed like babes, and attended like princes. There are sufficient vouchers on record,* which have been

* Vide Med. Nautica, in 3 vols.

translated into all the languages of Europe, to prove this important fact. The department is now filled with physicians and surgeons of the first abilities; and there has been an universal exertion throughout the service, to preserve health.

If there is any truth in what I have stated, the seaman can find no such comforts and encouragement in the employment of the merchant. But there, his heedless disposition has power to exercise itself: he has liberty to change, and feels his enjoyment in being a free agent. But even there he never saves a shilling: and not one in the thousand, is ever known to store up what is equal to the Naval pension, for the infirmities of age. Yet it is proverbial among them, that the King's guinea goes *farther* than any other guinea. They thus err against conviction; and misfortune does not add wisdom to experience.* To what can we then attribute this inconsistency, but to the compulsion of making them Man of War's men? The terrifying spectre is "*Impressment!*"

There is another step to our Naval power, which ought never to be lost sight of, the in-

* Vide Character of the British seaman, in the first Vol. of Med. Nautica.

creasing the number of our seamen by register. This can be best done by enforcing a proportion of apprentices to the tonnage of each mercantile ship. The servitude ought to be seven years, and every privilege attached to it, that the wisdom of the legislature can devise ; for privileges it ought to possess beyond every other class of his Majesty's subjects, as long as a Navy shall be considered the best defence of the United Empire. Seamen sufficient to man our Navy, must be brought up in the mercantile marine : but Naval officers can no where be educated but in a King's ship. Promotion in the Naval department, ought, however, never to be shut against the merchant seamen ; on the contrary, where there has been a regular apprenticeship of seven years, I think part of this time ought to be included in the term required for promotion to become a lieutenant of the Navy. I am afraid the mercantile marine is not much disposed to return these compliments ; and I know well that masters of merchant ships have an extreme aversion to seamen that have been long in a King's ship ; and one that has been brought up in a Man of War, is to them an object of contempt. These are the prepossessions of minds rather jealous ; and the conclusions of men who see little beyond their own sphere of action.

We have heard much of late, of British seamen quitting the country for foreign service, particularly to America. That many have left the country, I have no doubt; but that any considerable number should leave England for any encouragement they can obtain abroad, I can scarcely believe. Neither the public service of the United States, nor that of their private ships, can be better adapted to seamen than what is to be met with at home. And surely the comforts and pleasures of any American sea-port are much inferior to one in England. These reports are therefore not worth attending to.

From the beginning of the late contest with America to the present day, considerable animadversion has been employed on the relative situation of the British Navy with that of America. The jealousy of a rival Naval power appearing on the other side of the Atlantic, has drawn forth much invective and asperity on the supposed neglect of our Admiralty. The American ships are certainly well designed and constructed; but are not the size and manner of building ships of war easily imitated? These forms of improvement cannot be concealed from us: and ships are now getting ready in different yards capable of coping with them. Much criticism has also been employed on the actions

of single frigates, with those of America. I see not the reason for all this jealousy and ill-nature about American seamen and American ships. A nation like the United States can never so far forsake their own welfare, as to become a warlike power, either by land or sea, beyond what is required for defending themselves. That their ships have been gallantly fought, we must all confess. But no just censure can fall upon our officers and men ; for our ships were inferior in force. Why deny the meed of glory to America, when it is deserved ! Would it not have been grating to the feelings of Britons, to have seen this people a nation of cowards and poltroons ? Are not the Americans allied to us in blood, and sprung from us ? They inherit our religion, our government, our laws and manners. It is glorious to the country that gave them birth, that they cannot be called a degenerate race. Let us then, as their kindred, rejoice to see them excel in all the arts that embellish civilized life. How gratifying to our national dignity ! aye ! and to our pride too, to think that a people rising to greatness are now spreading the name of Britain over an immeasurable tract of land ; extending our language, and polishing the community, by the virtues and learning which can flourish only under freedom, and a condition of society that

protects person and property. How transporting the thought to look forward to that period, after the lapse of a few centuries, when the wilds of America shall be filled with cities and towns, her mighty sea-like rivers covered with ships and commerce, and her fields pouring forth plenty from English agriculture! Is not this a more pleasing prospect to contemplate, than waking up a constant contention between the only two countries on the face of the earth, that are worthy to live on terms of friendship with one another. Let us therefore hope, that the work of conciliation and peace, now going on between the two governments, will continue without interruption, while time endures.

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.

During my attendance on the Channel Fleet, from 1793 to 1802, I had often communication with the various army expeditions that took place in that period. It was impossible to view this branch of the military service, without seeing the numerous imperfections of the Transport Department. Many of these expeditions were undertaken on a sudden, according to the changing events of the war. Armies of a much greater magnitude than had been customary for this country to employ on distant service, were

often called together on emergencies, and embarked in a hurry. The transports for carrying soldiers, were thus taken up in haste as they could be got ready, and certainly many of them very unfit for such a purpose. Enormous premiums were frequently given for these vessels, and as might be expected, from the manner in which they were hired, they were badly found. In transporting an army, the first care ought to be taken, that the duty on which it is employed shall not be rendered abortive. But the very custom of publicly advertising for transport vessels in the newspapers, informed the enemy of our intentions, and thus frustrated them. It seemed strange to me, after this business had continued for years, that no person ever recommended to government, to build ships for transport employment solely. By looking at the expenditure of this department for the twenty-five years, it will be seen that a sum of money equal to have built the whole Navy of Britain *thrice* over, has been expended in transporting our forces. A set of "*new men*," have thus on a sudden, sprung up in the country, as if by magic; and confounded the sober calculations of temperate minds, who had not means of knowing by what machinery such jobs were converted into princely fortunes. And truly, this species of peculation, con-

trasted with the rewards given to the gallant men who have fought and bled for their native land, in the late arduous conflicts of war, would make us almost doubt we live in a christian country. For these men with their families, are now hid in obscurity, and consigned to poverty and oblivion !

I have, as on the Impress, in my work on the Diseases of the Fleet, offered remarks on the mode of transporting armies, and I am decidedly of opinion, that ships built for the purpose, on perfect designs, only should be employed on this duty. A set of merchant vessels of the most wretched description, have some times been collected to embark troops, wherein it was impossible to preserve either officers or men in comfort : some have even almost sunk at anchor. Many of the commanders of these ships must have been very ill suited for a business so different from a trading voyage. Now, ships of 1,000 or 1,200 tons, built at government expence, that are capable of accommodating a full battalion, with all the military stores and guns belonging, would be the most eligible transports. In these, an army might be preserved healthy and vigorous ; secure from whatever weather or seasons it might have to encounter, and at last landed at its destination in safety. In time of war, we ought to have

not less than forty ships of this description. They would be best commanded by a Master of the Navy, under the direction of the Navy Board, and not subject to martial law. I would allow 3,000 seamen, and 1,500 landmen out of the requisition, for manning these transports. Some of them also should be employed in peace for changing our army from the different settlements and garrisons, and this duty be confined solely to them. This change, I am convinced, would save millions to the country, and give a security to our expeditions, which they have not yet obtained, and never can from hired transports.* As our armies have been great

* First cost of 40 vessels of 1,200 tons, to be employed as transports, and stored with flat-bottomed boats, &c.....	£800,000
Four vessels to be built annually, to supply loss or decay.....	80,000
Wear and tear per ann.....	100,000
4,500 seamen for navigating these vessels, at naval allowance.....	270,000

	£1,250,000

It thus appears, that this immense scale of accommodation for our armies employed in foreign garrisons, or in expeditions, would cost only £450,000 per annum ; whereas in some years the transport service has amounted to from three to five millions !!! Such vessels would also be the most eligible for transporting convicts.

sufferers by confinement on ship-board, what are intended for a “*disposable force*” to act abroad, ought to be stationed near Falmouth or Cork, at which ports they might embark, and save a long and painful voyage down the Channel, by being only a few hours sail from an open sea. I should be extremely glad to see these hints attended to, by those who have it in their power to make use of them; for it is evident such a plan could not fail of saving immense sums of money, and make service more respectable, while it added to the health and comfort of the troops. The distress of the troops embarked in common transports in severe weather has often been great indeed. It will be remembered, that two-thirds of those which sailed with Sir Ralph Abercrombie, in 1795, were compelled to return to port, after being eight weeks at sea, from contrary winds. Now ships of sufficient capacity, and well manned, could suffer none of these hardships; and every expedition, by the projected change, would be accomplished in one-third of the usual time from hired vessels.

Should this plan of requisition ever be again resorted to, and made permanent, I would recommend some kind of general *uniform dress*

for Naval seamen. On this subject I have also touched before.* I think this might lead to great personal cleanliness, which especially in a ship, is a good preservative of health. Every seaman ought to possess a fixed wardrobe, by authority, which would make a muster of cloathing a business of attention; and would excite emulation among them. A Naval uniform would be considered an honourable distinction, and would create a kind of *esprit de corps*, throughout the service. Some badge might be added to distinguish the ship, such as the number in the Admiralty list, which could be moved when the seaman changed his vessel. This number painted neatly on a small round piece of canvas, or even metal, might be fixed to the front of the hat, and changed at pleasure. In those days, when the soldier's dress has been so much regarded, that of the seamen has excited no kind of attention. Having amply discussed this point formerly, I shall add no more.

It is impossible to turn from an inquiry that professes to add stability to the Royal Navy of Great Britain, without reflecting on its recent

* Med. Naut. vol. I.

achievements, and that stupendous mass of glory, which, under Divine Providence, has crowned its labours for the last twenty-five years. Nothing in the history of the world comes near it. Whether we consider the general victories of our fleets, or the actions with single ships of the enemy, there is abundant cause for exultation. It is not valour only that has been conspicuous ; but the most consummate skill in practical seamanship has, on all occasions, had its full share in the different battles. The very harbours have been entered in pursuit of flying foes, and become familiar to our officers, while many ships have been captured under the batteries which, in vain, were erected for their protection. Not only single cruisers, but large squadrons, have been accustomed to anchor in the bays and roadsteads on the coast of France, with as much security from gales of wind, as if they had sought shelter in an English port. The dread of shoals and a lee-shore seem to have lost all their terrors in the late Naval operations. After the fleets of France were annihilated, the post of honour still fell to the lot of the British Navy : and when the armies of Europe were scattered, and fugitives on the face of the earth, and beaten from every garrison, the Naval Arm of England sustained the hope of the civilized

world, and stood between it and destruction. It thus kept even the French armies at bay, till Providence, by the interposition of a Russian winter, overwhelmed them with ruin ; and what escaped the inclemency of frozen skies, was compleated by the battles of Leipsic and Waterloo.

Would it not then be a boon worthy of the parliament of the United Kingdoms, to pass an act for the permanent abolition of Impressing Seamen, in *remembrance* of what the Royal Navy has done for the independence of Europe ? Such an act would do honour to the legislature. It would stamp the peace of Europe with more security than can be done by any other means. For when the surrounding nations are assured that Great Britain can call forth her Navy with a rapidity and promptitude which were never seen before, they will turn with more confidence to her councils, and place more reliance on her strength. A fleet of sixty sail of the line, with the usual proportion of small vessels, might at all times be ready for sea, in *six weeks*. And according to the Plan which I have proposed for the transport service, 10,000 troops might be embarked for duty abroad in garrisons, or to attack the enemy any where else, in a *single month*, without the least suspicion of its being known where the attack was meditated.

Thus should we be prepared at all points, in a short period, either for defence of our own settlements, or for annoying those of the enemy; and full protection be given at once to our trade, which in no former war was ever accomplished for the first twelve months.

It has been matter of just regret to many who are advocates for a Naval system, to see the Navy reduced to so small a scale, while the troops are to continue nearly six times the number of our seamen. The present men in power seem not to have adverted to the well-known maxim, that all insular colonies can be better defended by ships than garrisons. Whoever is master of the seas, must soon bring every island under his subjection, or make it not worth the retaining. The last war, as well as all former wars, gave ample but melancholy proofs of this. Had the squadron that was sent to the West Indies early in 1793, under Admiral Gardner, remained there, or any other commanding Naval force, the immense armies that were afterwards sent out under Sir C. Grey and Sir R. Abercrombie, could not have been wanted. The Vengeance of 74 guns, then commanded by Captain, afterwards Sir C. Thompson, carried out the delegates from the French royalists of Martinique, Guadalupe, &c. to the British ministry. Two regiments of infantry had em-

barked at Cork, to sail for the islands, under convoy of the Vengeance; but from the hope of affording more effectual aid to the royalists in France, these regiments were countermanded and disembarked. When the Vengeance joined Admiral Gardner off Martinique, in July, General Bruce had arrived with a battalion of the Royals. It was now determined to land these troops, and with the marines of the squadron to join the royalists behind St Pierre's. The royalists were commanded by General Jemmet, a man of the most noble character, who was afterwards wounded, and died at Dominica. But after landing, the republican party was found too strong, and hourly receiving reinforcements; the troops were therefore reembarked. The failure of this business was owing to the want of the two regiments originally intended for it. The men of war returned to England, and from this time the cause of the revolution gained superiority in the islands, and fresh succours soon arrived from France. To obtain these islands, future expeditions were necessary, which cost this country not less than one hundred millions of money, and eighty thousand human lives, which perished by the diseases of the climate! The "*fevers of the West Indies,*" so fatal to the raw European constitution, have baffled all medical investiga-

tion. After all that has been said and written on the subject, they remain the *opprobrium medicorum*, and must remain such, for it is impossible to furnish the sick bed with an *European temperature*! The soil of the islands is the furnace or laboratory, as it may be well called, whence this pestilence is evolved, therefore no army can ever preserve its health when landed. But the seas are safe, and *more favourable* to the lives of seamen than even the home seas. Let us then cultivate our Naval system, and abstain from conquests that must be purchased with so vast an expence of money and lives. This narrative affords a practical lesson to all statesmen, if they have the wisdom and discernment to avail themselves of it.

But the *abandonment* of a Naval system must lead to disasters still more serious in the issue, to this country. We have, from high authority, been promised a lasting peace. Whatever faith may be attached to this promise, we ought to be on our guard, and not lulled into a stupefied security. Should even a peace of 20 years take place, how is the Navy of Britain to be preserved; and what is to be its condition at that period? These are serious questions, and not easy to be resolved. That ships fully equipped, fresh and well built, may be ready for emergency, I can well hope for, from the

preparations now going on. But there is a *vital part* of this mighty machine, that is prone to decay ; and when once gone can never be re-touched ! The modern soldier can be instructed, and made perfect in his exercise, even before his German whiskers are fully thickened on his lip ; and almost before a taylor can furnish his French habiliments :* But the knowledge of a Naval officer is something like his native oak, slow in arriving at perfection. A twenty years peace would nearly exhaust all the officers of experience who have figured in our naval annals for the last 20 years. According to the course of nature, not ten admirals out of the 100, would be then alive and fit for service ; and of all other officers, except midshipmen, the proportion of survivors would be nearly the same. What then should be the most effectual mode for training a succession of heroes, that shall convey to futurity those compleat tactics and discipline, that have raised our maritime glory to its present height ? In the peace esta-

* There was a time when the *plain front* of a British soldier was formidable to his enemies ; but it seems now, that the beard of a Jew, and the mustachios of a Hun, a Croat, and a Cossack, and the petty trappings of French dress, are necessary to the equipment of a military beau. I sincerely pray, that the Naval hero of the country may never be seen in this semi-barbarous disguise !

blishment, when a ship goes on a cruize, it is but a formal excursion to take an airing. In a squadron of ships of the line, like the cruize of last summer, it creates nothing but *ennui*! To answer the full purposes of giving experience to young officers, a plan must be devised that will fix their attention to some interesting object, rouse the passion of fame and distinction, excite emulation, and create enterprise. This might be done by employing an addition of 5,000 men to the present peace quota.* Let this number consist of a large proportion of young officers, lieutenants, midshipmen, &c. and let 30, or 35 of the smaller frigates and sloops be fitted out to contain them. These vessels might be supplied with schoolmasters in all the different branches of useful and ornamental learning; besides officers of the first knowledge and experience in naval affairs. I would divide the 35 vessels into seven squadrons, and dispatch them separately, to every distant settlement; furnish them with all the requisite charts and astronomical instruments; and let them make surveys and observations on all the coasts and harbours they may visit and touch at. Their stay at one settlement should

* Reduce your army for this purpose, to defray the expence; if the glare of military parade has not fascinated the nation.

not be longer than to obtain such knowledge as belongs to the profession. In this species of duty some of the privations and hardships incident to a sea-life would be occasionally felt, by which means they would become seamen, not in name only, but in reality. A regular routine of promotion for those best qualified by talent and good behaviour, would form a necessary conclusion to this school of experience and tactics. Thus might we have some chance of seeing one generation of naval worthies constantly succeeding another; and the country deriving confidence and security from their abilities and experience. A proportion of officers and seamen has been taken from guardships, for the purpose of manning small vessels to watch smugglers. This is certainly a better employment for young men than the *garrison* duty of a guard-ship. But the plan of cruizing and surveying squadrons, just mentioned, would appear to be a better school for enterprize, and the high-minded virtues which are necessary to form an accomplished Naval officer.

Within these few years, the number of young gentlemen has been increased at the “*Naval Academy*” of Portsmouth; but these bear so small a proportion to the Naval list, that their mode of study can have little effect on general service. It is erring from all consistency to

think of educating Naval officers any where but in ships : and the very term of years which they spend at the Academy, is the severest drawback of their education ; for it is at a time that should be employed in associating them with the habits, privations, and hardships, which are inseparable from a sea-life. How absurd to think, that the *pigmy* excursions of the little Yacht, round the Isle of Wight, or to Southampton River, can fit officers for a profession, whose duties may call them to double Cape Horn, or to explore the Straits of Babelmandel. Government ought, therefore, to be more bountiful than it has ever yet been, and accommodate every ship with a qualified school-master. No money could be better bestowed, than in liberally educating our young officers ; for the country would be amply rewarded by the services of these gentlemen, as their years increased. This has been long a just cause of complaint in the Navy.

Let it then be received as an incontrovertible fact, that to preserve our maritime ascendancy, it is the living power, the animating soul of *practical seamanship*, which gives vigour and impulse to this mighty machine, which must be cherished, watched, and renovated in a succession of young officers, inured from boyhood to Naval discipline, familiar with its habits, and

versed in its tactics. To build a fine model, twist a cable, and weave canvas, are very useful arts ; but all of an inferior cast : it is the consummate skill, valour, and decision of the officer, that form the Corinthian capital of this structure, and the temple of glory in our unrivalled Naval System.

“ *Esto perpetua !*”

FINIS.

POSTSCRIPT.

SOME distinguished Naval friends of the Author, having been pleased to express their regret, that he should have had no share in the late transactions of the Navy; he hereby desires to inform them, that the consequences of a severe personal injury, which he received in June, 1795, after the battle off Groa, in ascending a ship's side, during a tremendous swell of the sea, to visit a wounded officer,* had, before his retirement in 1802, incapacitated him for all active duty in boats; and from that period, he has been under the necessity of confining himself, for some hours of every day, to a horizontal posture, to relieve the painful effects of his misfortune, which have daily increased.

T. T.

* Capt. Grindall, of the Irresistible, 74 guns.

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